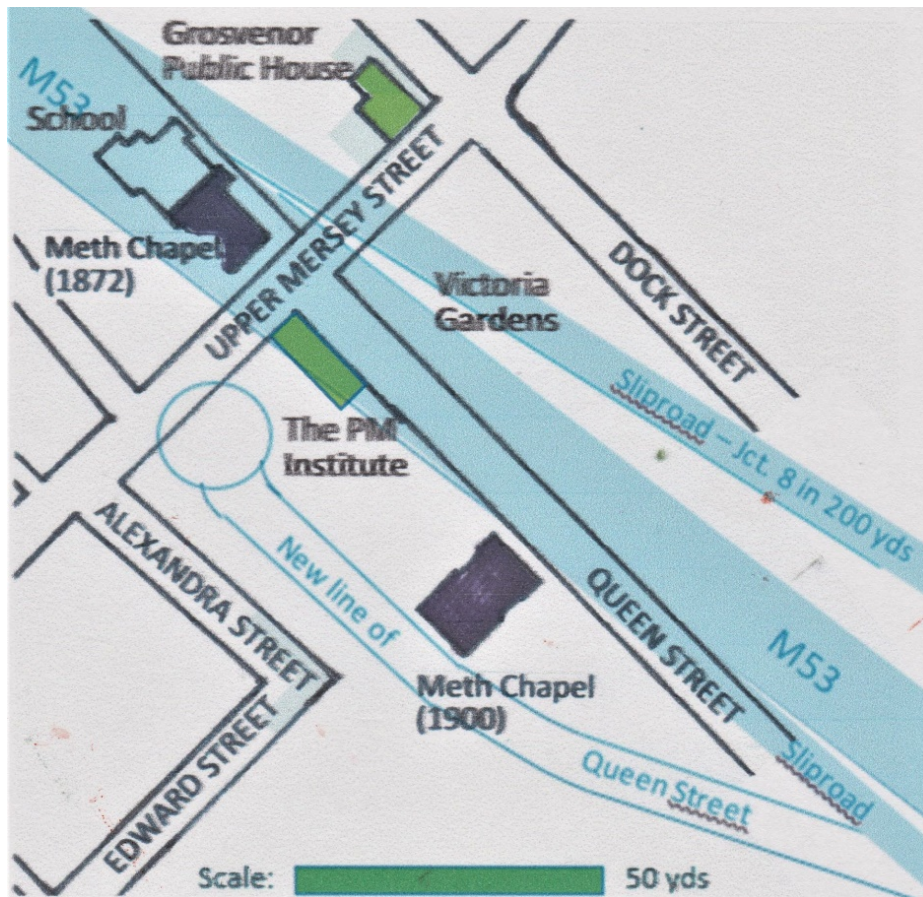


Ellesmere Port Primitive Methodist chapels



Sketch Map showing the two PM chapels overlaid with the current M53 motorway and the repositioned Queen Street (based on 25" OS maps from [1894](#) and [1937](#))

Early Primitive Methodism in Ellesmere Port

1840s?: There were two [1851 Census Returns for Non-Denominational Places of Worship](#) for the parish of Eastham; both of the locations were probably in Ellesmere Port; the first reported:

‘Erected’ in 1823, a dwelling house with sittings for 40; recent afternoon service attendance 30; reported by John Stockton [about whom more later], steward.

1847: From ‘[Ellesmere Port: Primitive Methodism in Ellesmere Port](#), transcribed from *The Christian Messenger*, 1905/23’:

‘It was in this year [1847] that the first Primitive Methodist service was held in Ellesmere Port, when the late Mr. John Stockton – who may be designated the pioneer of Primitive Methodism in the village – opened his house on Primrose Hill [off Lower Mersey Road] for a prayer meeting. Mr. Stockton was at that time a member of the little Primitive Methodist society in the hamlet of Pooltown, or Overpool as it was then called, about a mile away....

‘The prayer meetings held in Mr. Stockton’s cottage ... were a great success, and very soon a society was formed, which rapidly grew both in numbers and influence ...’

1849: The second [1851 Census Return](#) reported:

‘Opened for a Place of Worship’ in 1849; sittings for 80; recent attendance 50 at the morning service and 62 at the evening service; reported by Thomas Hales, steward.

John Stockton didn't arrive in Ellesmere Port until 1838, so this entry and the previous one presumably refer to the same location – Mr Stockton's cottage.

1856: Continuing from *The Christian Messenger*, 1905/23': '.... and ultimately a large room, over a bakery in Church Street [CH65 2AB], was taken....'. According to '[The Stocktons of Ellesmere Port](#)' in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* 1918/174, 'In 1856 he [John Stockton] rented a room over the old bakehouse, which served as a place of worship until 1872 [when the first chapel was opened – see below] ...'

1857: According to the [Post Office Directory for Cheshire](#), page 114, section for Eastham: 'Ellesmere Port or Whitby Locks [its previous name] is a well-built village, in the township of Whitby, in the parish of Eastham, situated at the confluence of the Ellesmere canal and the river Mersey ... Here is the terminus of the Ellesmere canal, which by its branches communicates with the Severn, The Dee and the Mersey, and opens up the inland navigation from Liverpool to North Wales and Bristol. The docks and warehouses are all well constructed and substantially built; 50 coasting vessels can be here accommodated at one time. Here is a great trade in iron, more than 2000 tons having passed through these docks in the course of a week... Steamers depart from this place at every tide, conveying merchandise and passenger to Liverpool and other ports.... The Primitive Methodists have a meeting place here [over the bakery].'

1864: According to [Morris's Directory for Cheshire](#), page 487, section for Whitby, or Whitby Locks, sub-section for Ellesmere Port: 'The Primitive Methodists have a place of worship here [still the bakery].'

Upper Mersey Street Chapel

1870: Continuing from *The Christian Messenger*, 1905/23':

'In 1870, ... it was decided to build a chapel to seat 350 persons, and at a cost of £1,760. '

1872: Continuing: 'The chapel was erected, and [opened] in 1872.... The development of local industry, notably that connected with the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company, resulted in a largely-augmented population, and the trustees deemed it prudent, a few years later than the opening of their chapel to build a suite of premises for day and Sunday school purposes. This was done at an additional cost of more than £1,000. At a still later date, a capital and modern infant school was added to the estate at an expenditure of £800. '



Taken in the 1950s

The chapel is clearly labelled on an [1872 6" OS map](#) surrounded by fields; the nearest building is the Grosvenor Public House about 30 yards to the north-east and there is a kiln nearby. An [1894 25" OS map](#) has been used to scale the chapel: about 37ft x 61ft with a school behind scaling at about 45ft square plus extensions (see 1897 below).

1874: From [Morris and Co. Directory of Cheshire](#), Ellesmere Port section (page 255):

'The Primitive Methodists have a neat place of worship here, which was erected in 1871, at a cost of nearly £2000; it has accommodation for about 400 persons, and is licensed for the solemnization of marriages and baptisms. Behind the chapel is a school room, which will hold about the same number, and in which a day school is held under Government inspection.'

1882: The [Q4 Preaching Plan for the Chester 1st Circuit](#) showed twelve 'Places': [George Street \(1862/3\)](#) [Chester](#) (head of circuit), [Guilden Sutton](#), [Saughall](#), [Willaston](#), [Little Neston](#), [Whitby](#), [Ellesmere Port](#), Pool

Town, [Manley](#), [Elton](#), Dunham and [Trafford](#). At Ellesmere Port there were weekly Sunday services at 10.30pm and 6pm, led mostly by lay preachers with one of the ministers visiting about every third week. Nearly every week, the preacher took the morning service, then the 2pm service at Pool Town and finally the evening service back in Ellesmere Port. Alternate weeks there was a Tuesday evening service at 7pm usually taken by a minister. The chapel had three classes and a Mission Band.

1892: Ellesmere Port Circuit was formed, separating from Chester First Circuit; the Ellesmere Port chapel became the head of a new Circuit, with Whitby and Pooltown as members.

1897: From [Kelly's Directory of Cheshire 1902](#), page 313, Ellesmere Port Schools: 'Primitive Methodist (mixed), built in 1872 & enlarged in 1897, for 500 children; average attendance, 413; Wm. Brecken, master; Miss Price, mistress.' The 1910 Directory states that the school was enlarged again in 1899 giving places for 600 children.

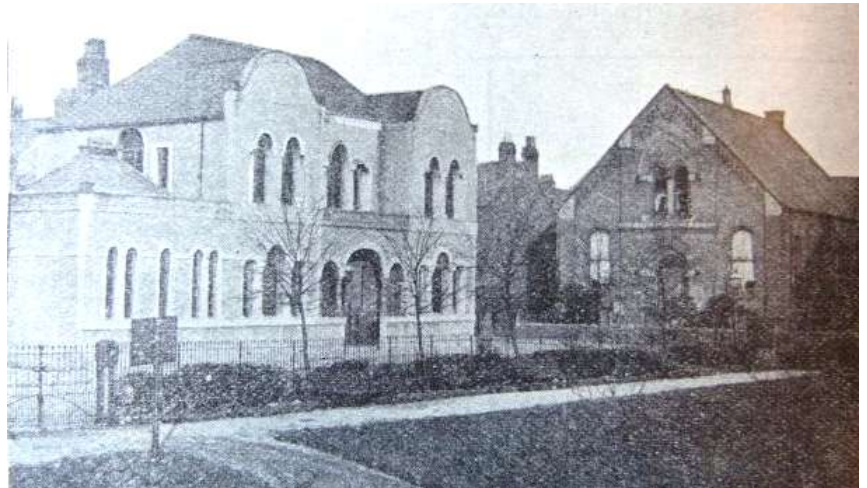
1900: After the Queen Street Chapel was built (next section), the old chapel was converted into 'Central Hall' and the school building behind it continued in use (see [1908](#) map).

The site is now underneath the M53 (building started in 1968); the nearest house is No. 1 Stanley Street, CH65 2BQ, about 50m to the south-west. Upper Mersey Street has been renamed Grace Street.

The Primitive Methodist Institute

1895: Continuing from *The Christian Messenger* article: 'Apart from the public-house [The Grosvenor], there was no local provision for many of the social requirements of these people. Hence, again taking time by the forelock, the idea was conceived to erect a Primitive Methodist Institute, with café, reading-room, recreation-room, parlour, gymnasium, etc.... this was accomplished at an outlay of £1,400, and opened in the year 1895.'

The Institute was built on the south side of Queen Street at the junction with Upper Mersey Street. The unlabelled footprint can be seen on the [1897 25"](#) [OS map](#); it scales at about 75ft x 26ft.



*P.M. INSTITUTE AND CENTRAL HALL
View west from Victoria Gardens across Queen Street to the Institute;
Upper Mersey Street runs between the Institute and the 1872 chapel,
by this time converted into Central Hall*



*Upper Mersey Street, facing north-east
Beyond the chapel on the left are a terrace of three houses, then the Grosvenor Public House, then Dock Street and finally the tall building of the mill. Beyond the houses on the right, the end of the Institute (white-faced building) can just be seen*

Queen Street Chapel



Queen Street Chapel

The Institute can be seen at the far end of the street, and the Upper Mersey Street chapel is facing back up Queen Street



*Queen Street Chapel
from Victoria Gardens*

1900: The Upper Mersey Street chapel was replaced by a much larger chapel in Queen Street, only about 70 yards away. It is clearly labelled on a [1937 25" OS map](#), from which the chapel scales at about 44ft x 76ft. From [Kelly's Directory of Cheshire 1902](#), page 313: 'There is a Primitive Methodist chapel, built in 1900 at a cost of £3,500, and seating 670 persons.'

The [1940 list of Methodist chapels](#) has an entry for this chapel in the 'Districts C' download, page 73, Circuit 411: Ellesmere Port:

Queen Street (Ellesmere Port): Brick; seating for 650; Pews; 4 School Halls; 9 other rooms.

1968: The Queen Street chapel was closed and demolished to make way for the new M53 motorway. It was replaced by a new chapel, known as Westminster chapel, in John Nicholas Crescent. That chapel closed in about 2003.

Heathfield Road Chapel

1908: From [Kelly's Directory of Cheshire 1910](#), page 328: '[There is] a Mission chapel, belonging to the same sect [Primitive Methodist] erected in Heathfield Road in 1908.'

It is marked as 'Meth. Church' on the [1937 25" OS map](#) at the south end of Heathfield Road; it scales at about 40ft x 36ft. The nearest modern building is 13 Heathfield Road, CH65 8DH.

The [1940 list of Methodist chapels](#) has an entry for this chapel in the 'Districts C' download, page 73, Circuit 411: Ellesmere Port:

Heathfield Road: Brick; seating for 200; Chairs; no School Hall; 2 other rooms.

1914: From [A Timely War? by Mike Roydend](#): '... [August meeting] it was decided to open two more soup kitchens, at the Heathfield Road Mission and the Church Institute.... By the next meeting of the newly formed War Relief Committee on 7 September 1914, it was reported that the new soup kitchens in Heathfield Road and the Church Institute were giving away 6,000 dinners a week – over 800 a day –'

1963: According to the [Cheshire Archives](#), the chapel was closed and sold.